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May 20, 2008

Dear Families Participating in First Steps,

We are pleased to announce that the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Division of Special Education will be taking over the full implementation of Missouri's infant and toddler program, First Steps.

The provision of First Steps service coordination being solely provided through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will enhance and improve local involvement in the provision of a trans-disciplinary, family centered service delivery system of early intervention services.

The Division of Special Education and Division of MRDD, along with the System Point of Entry (SPOEs), have been working closely to ensure a successful and smooth transition of the First Steps Service Coordination. For those individuals currently participating in the First Steps program who will be transitioning to Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) by September 7, 2008, you will maintain your current service coordinator until the transition to Part B of IDEA occurs. For those children and families who will not be aging out of the First Steps program before September 7, 2008, the transition will occur over the next several months at a natural transition point (i.e., 6-month review or annual review of your child's program).

The Division of Special Education and Division of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities will continue to work collaboratively during this transition period to ensure the best possible services for you and your child.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bernard Simons".

Bernard Simons
Director
Division of Mental Retardation and
Developmental Disabilities

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heidi Atkins Lieberman".

Heidi Atkins Lieberman
Assistant Commissioner
Division of Special Education

BS:TC:mls